1. Description of the research question /s addressed and more specific hypotheses (if any) proposed.

The work was published by Martine R. Hass and Morten T. Hansen of the Warton School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and INSEAD, Fontainebleau, France. In the paper the author propose three separate, but related, hypothesis:

Hypothesis #1:
Electronic document quality reduces the time a focal team spends on a task, while document rework increases it.

Basically this states that documentation that possesses high quality information and requires a low amount of rework (rewriting) for relevance to the task at hand is expected to produce the results of higher productivity in the terms of timesaving for the task as a whole.

DIRECT QUOTE:
“The mechanism through which electronic documents affect task performance is reuse, defined as the proportion of a document’s content that a task unit can incorporate into its task output, such as a written sales proposal for a new client contract.”

Hypothesis #2
Advisor’s experience improves a focal teams work quality, while their lack of effort decreases it.

The gain in productivity a team experiences from using personal advice is very likely a result of both the level of experience and knowledge of the task possessed by the advisor as well as the amount of assistance the advisor gives to the team. When a team relies on the advice from an experienced expert but the expert offers very little effort to help the team, the team experiences little to no improvement in work quality. Likewise, when a team relies on an inexperienced colleague who is willing to exert adequate effort to help the team, there may be no improvement in the quality of the work.

DIRECT QUOTE:
“While electronic documents must be reworked or augmented to adapt the knowledge they contain to the task, the benefits available from colleagues’ advise depend on the amount of effort those colleagues are willing to exert to help the team.”

Hypothesis #3
Advisors’ experience improves the signaling of competencies, while their lack of effort decreases it.

A team’s ability to signal its competence to its constituencies is influenced by an advisor’s effort given to the team as well as their relevant knowledge and experience. This is true up to a point though. Too much help from experts and it could signal that the team is incompetent and can only succeed with outside help.

DIRECT QUOTE:
“In the management consulting context, enlisting colleagues who can directly communicate to external constituencies that the sales team is highly competent helps the team establish credibility.”

Results:
1. Sharing codified knowledge through the use of electronic documentation, although it saves time in the task, it does not improve the quality of the work produced or signal competence to clients.
2. Work quality was improved by sharing personal advice and signaled competence but saved no time.

Limitations:
1. The approach used relied upon cross-sectional design and perceptual measures. This has drawbacks in that it can infer causality and potential biases in some measures therefore some caution needs to be exercised when interpreting the results.
2. The study focused on only one specific industry. The findings of the study should be tested against other settings to compare validity across different industries.